

# *Southeastern Massachusetts: A Region at Risk*



## THE NATURE OF GROWTH IN SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

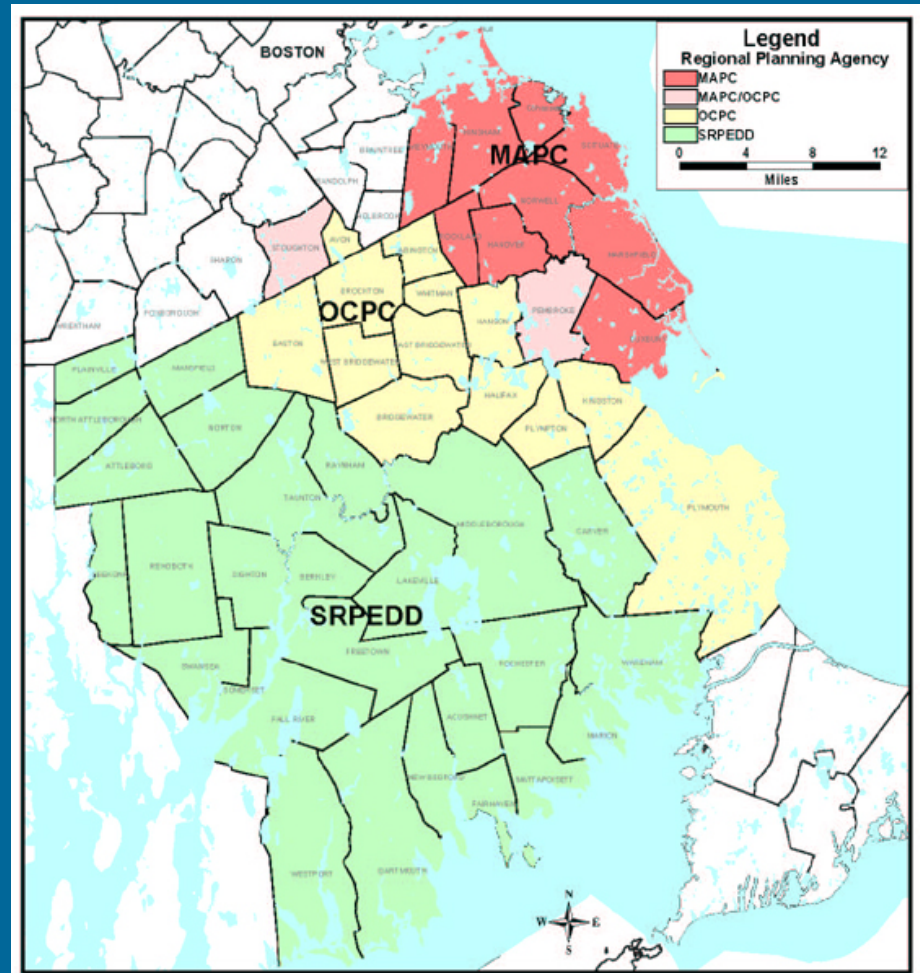


Beyond Sewering  
November 16, 2005



# Southeastern Massachusetts: Vision 2020 Region

- 52 cities and towns in 3 counties
- 1 million people
- 1,300 square miles
- 3 RPA's (SRPEDD, OCPC, MAPC)



# GROWTH $\neq$ SPRAWL

Southeastern Massachusetts is the State's growth frontier

1. Amount of Growth
2. Distribution of Growth
3. Characteristics of Growth (Sprawl)
4. Impacts of Sprawl

What has our response been?

What challenges lay ahead?



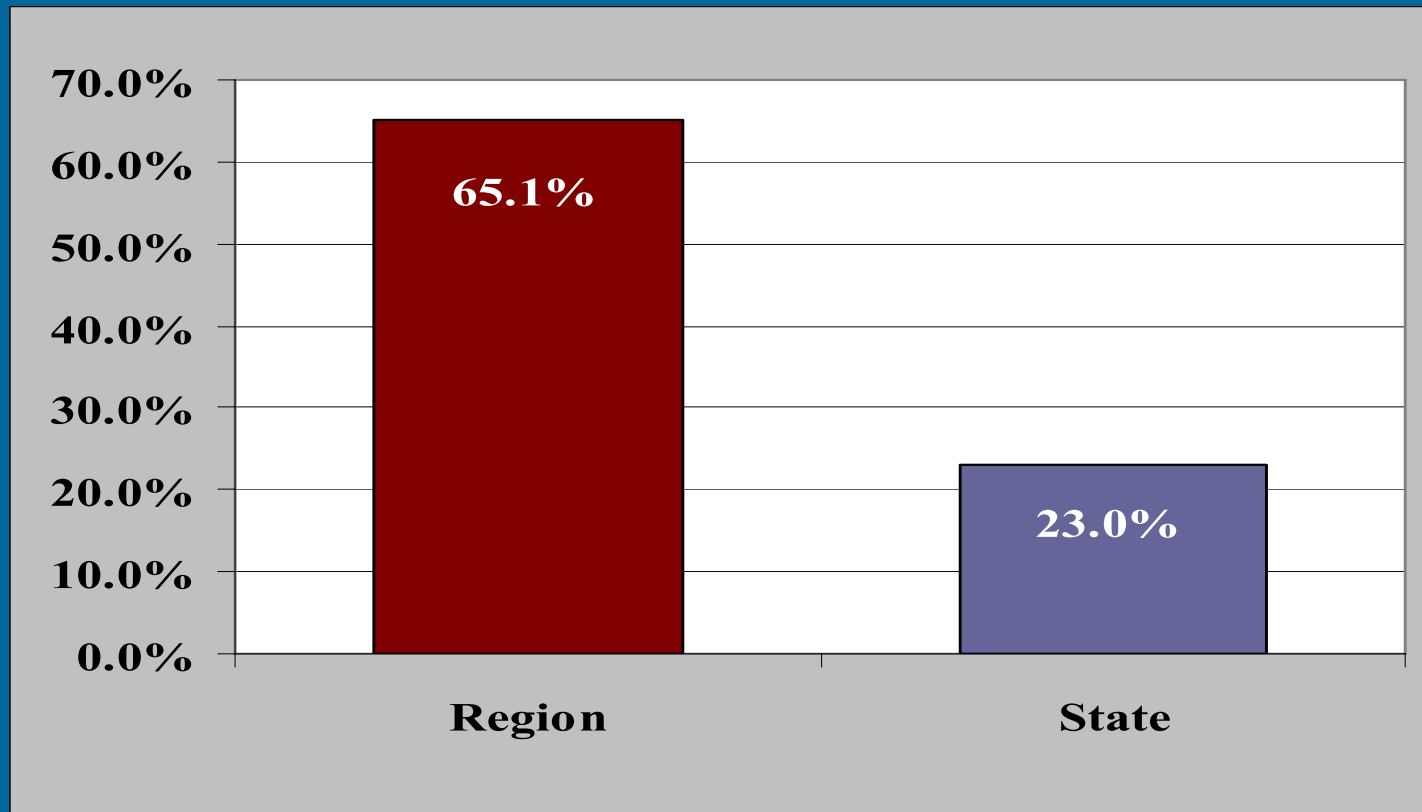
# Smart Growth vs. Sprawl

Sprawl is the nemesis of smart growth



# 1. AMOUNT OF GROWTH

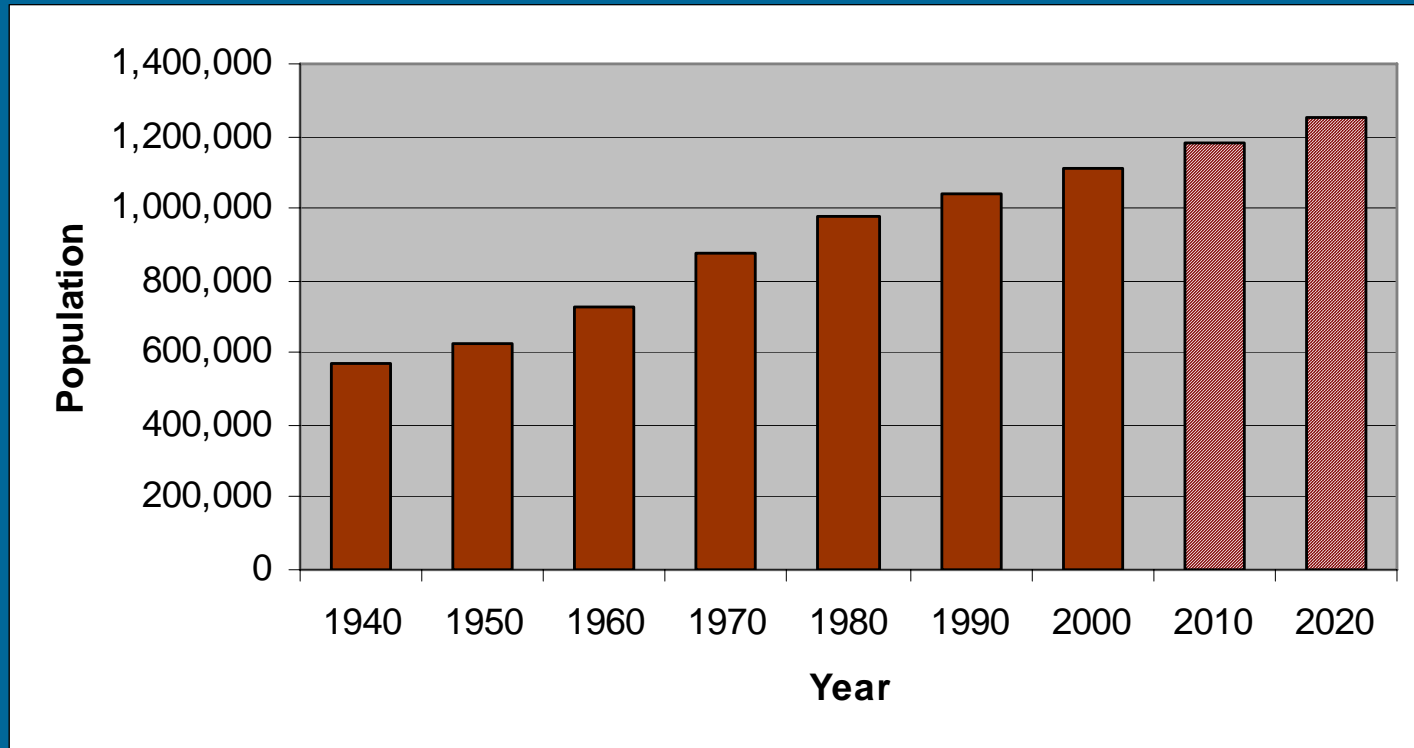
Regional population growth rate **triple** the state growth rate, or approximately **10,000** new people per year



Population Increase 1960 - 2000  
637,937 to 1,054,036 (+416,099)

# 1. AMOUNT OF GROWTH

Population – Southeastern Massachusetts  
1940-2020



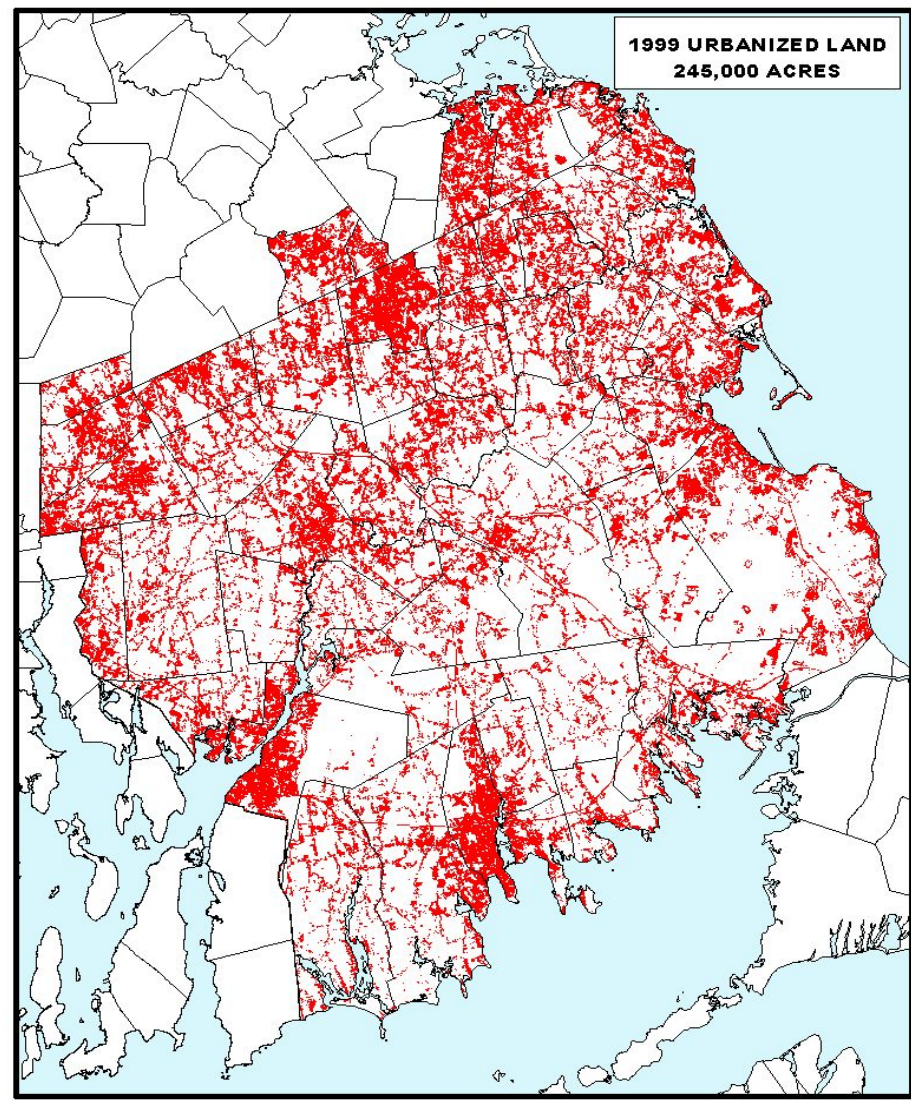
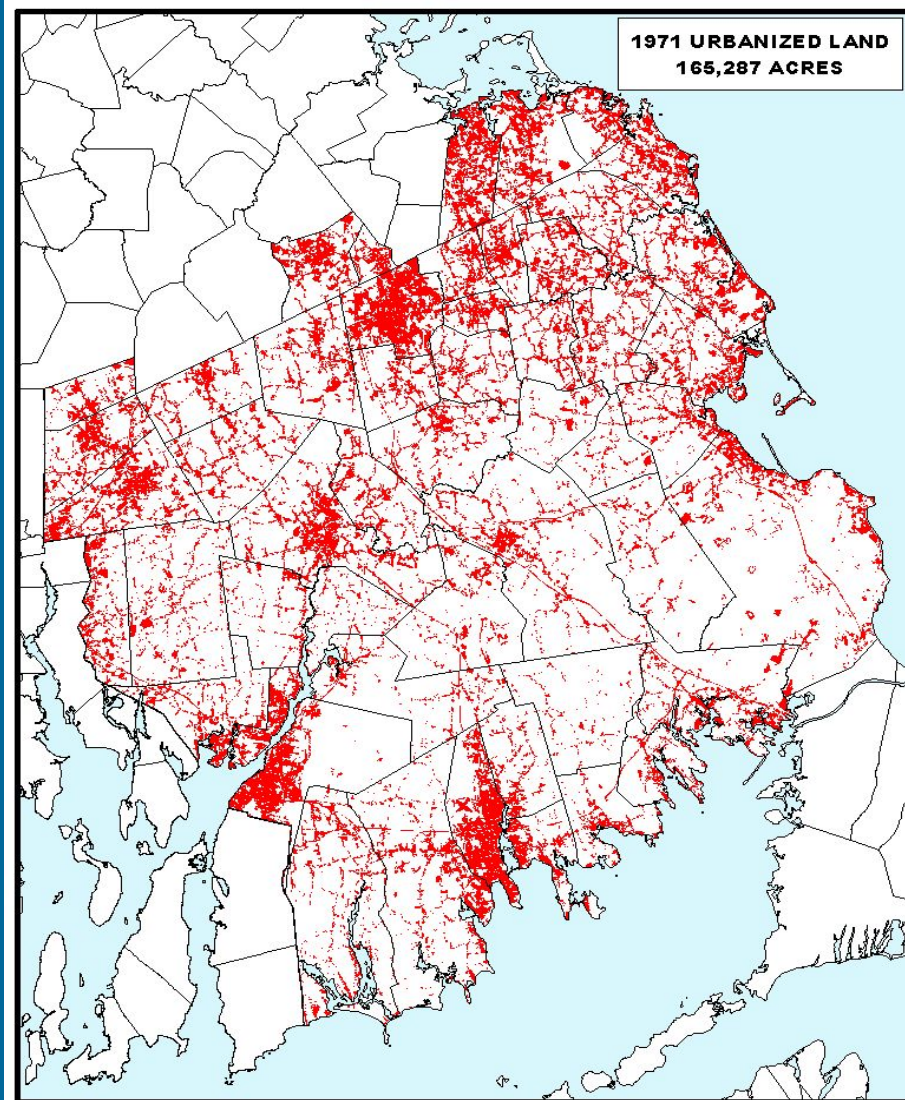
Regional population growth rate **triple** the state growth rate (<2% year) or approximately **10,000** new people per year

# 1. AMOUNT OF GROWTH

(125 square miles = 7.8 acres/day every day for 28 years)

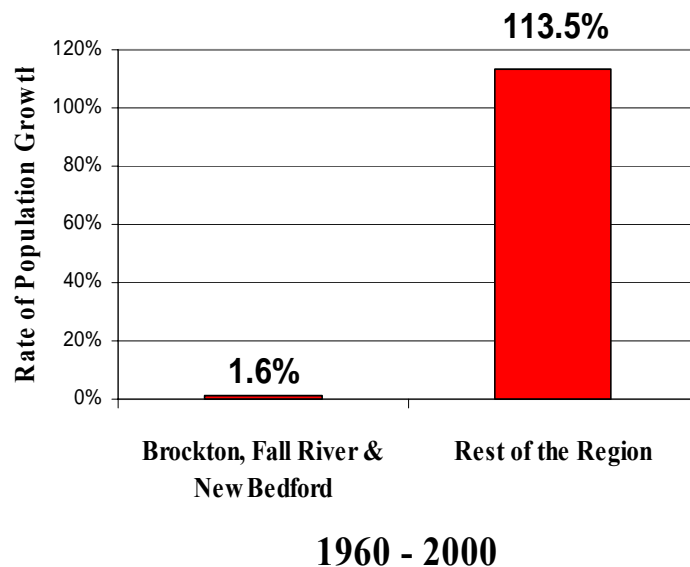
1971

1999



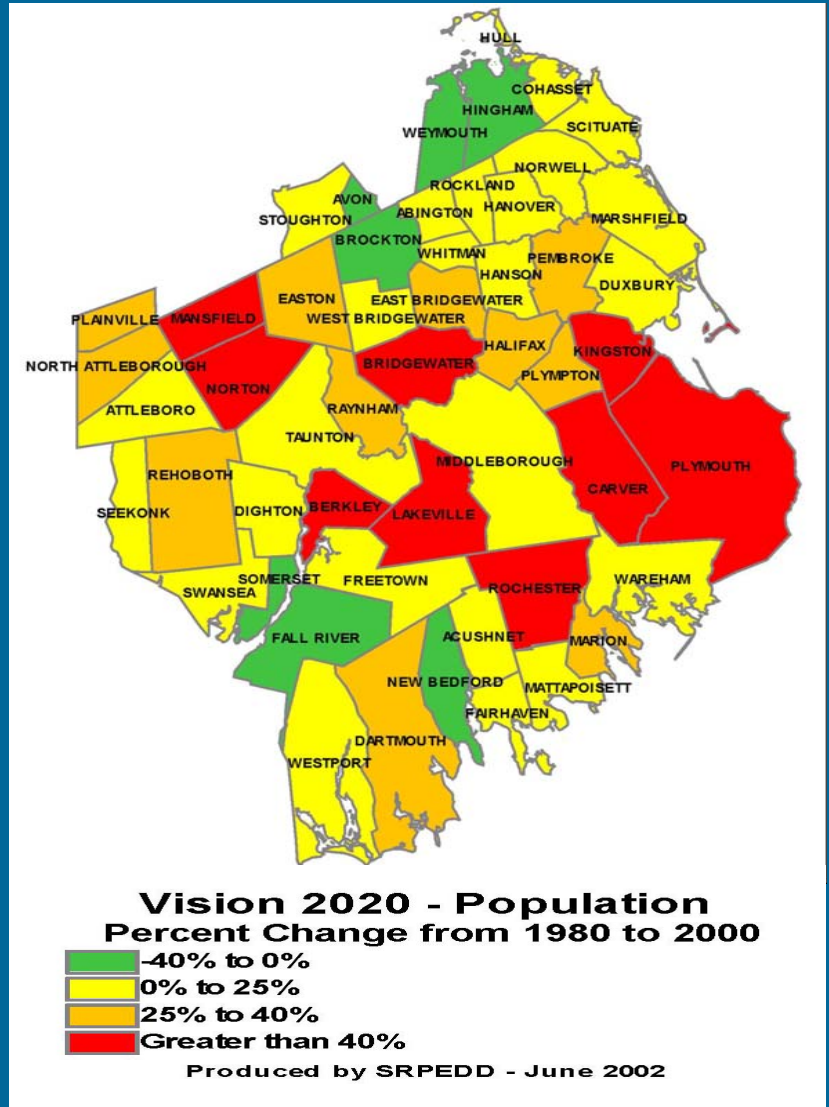
## 2. DISTRIBUTION OF GROWTH

Regional growth is unevenly distributed  
*(Both large numerical and large percentage gains)*



## 2. DISTRIBUTION OF GROWTH 1980-2000

- Twenty towns exceeded **25%**
- Nine communities exceeded **40%**
- Nine communities added more than **5,000** new residents



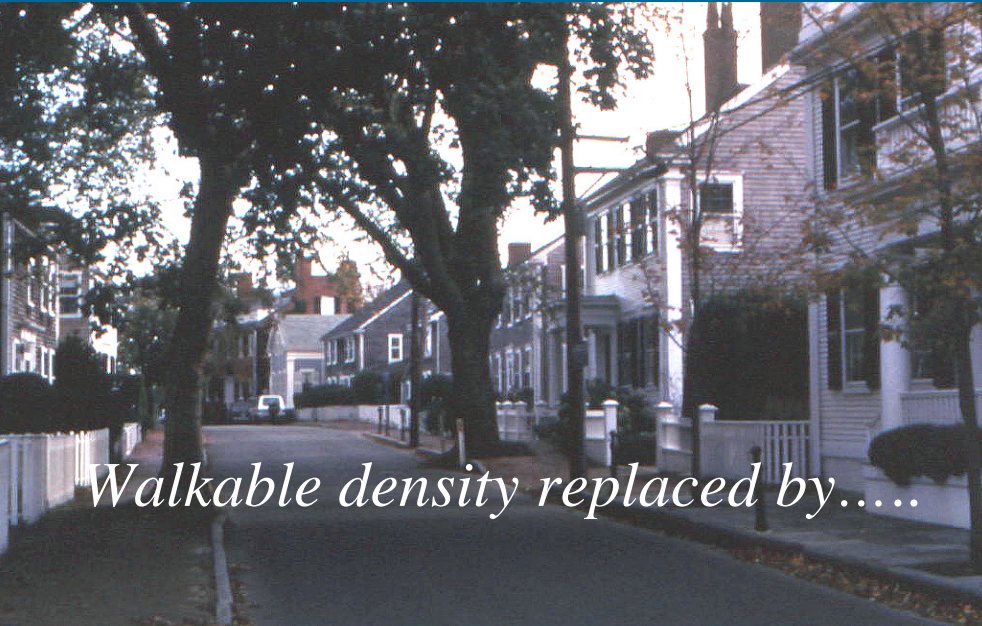
### 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF REGION'S GROWTH

Land is being developed at three times the rate of  
population growth = **SPRAWL**

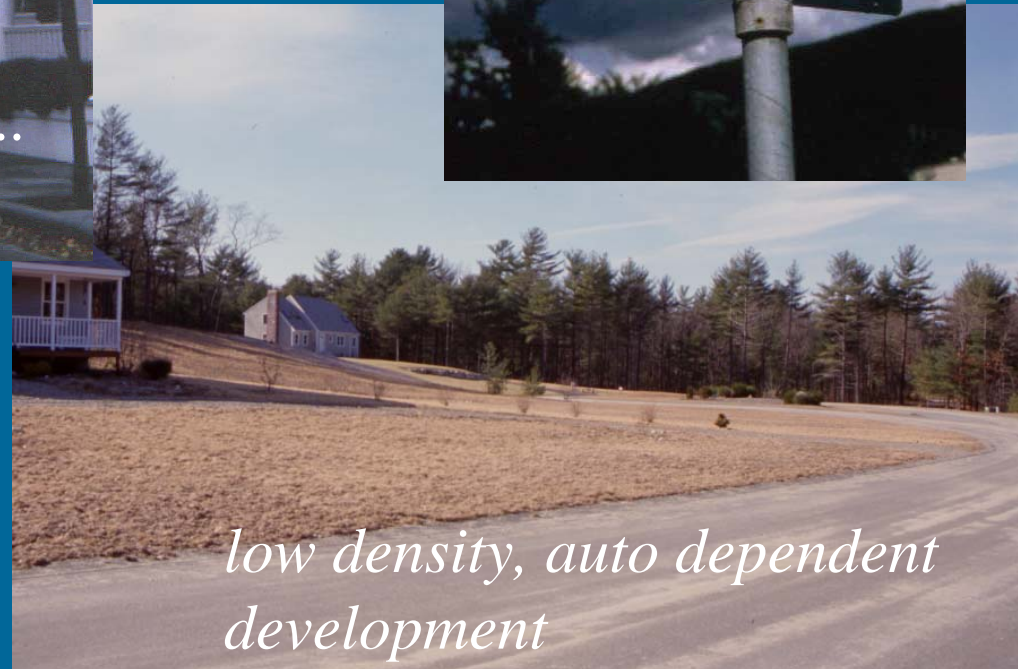


*We have developed more land since 1960 than in the  
previous 340 years*

### 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWTH = SPRAWL (Residential)



*Walkable density replaced by.....*



*low density, auto dependent  
development*

### 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWTH = SPRAWL (Commercial)



# 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWTH = SPRAWL (Transportation)

*Public transportation policy  
promotes sprawl...*

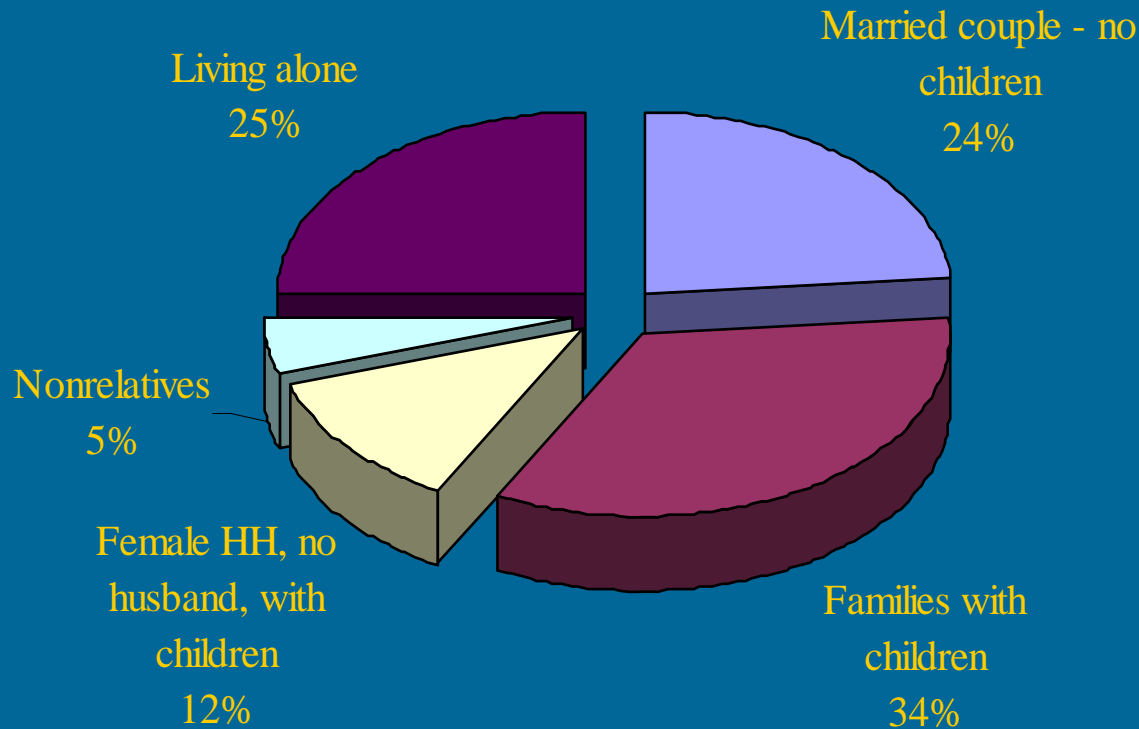


*alternatives to the car costly  
and difficult to implement*

### 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF SPRAWL

New housing stock is not meeting the needs of new types of households (lack of choices)

HOUSEHOLD TYPES, 2000

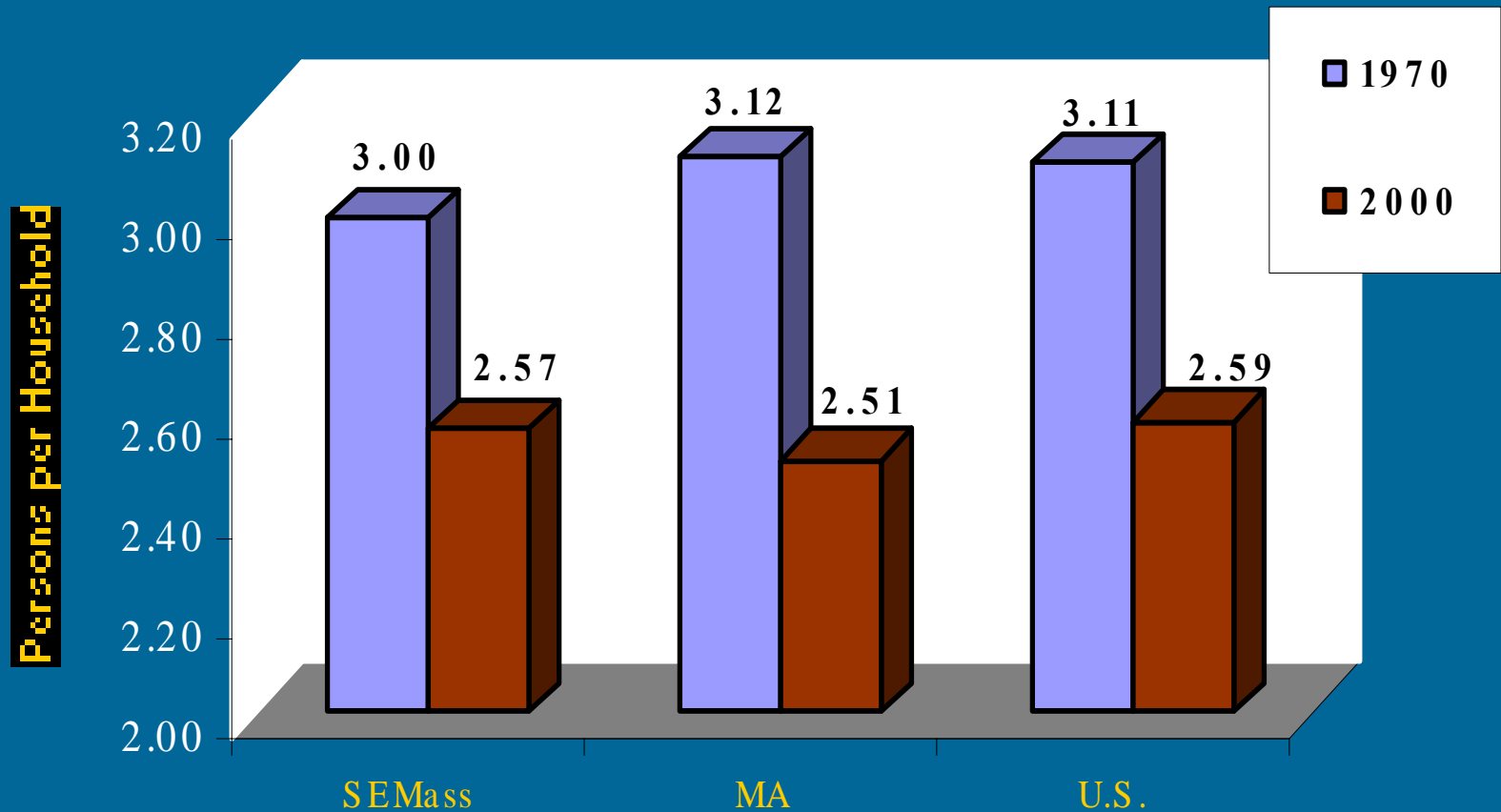


SOURCE: U.S. Census



# 3. CHARACTERISTICS OF SPRAWL

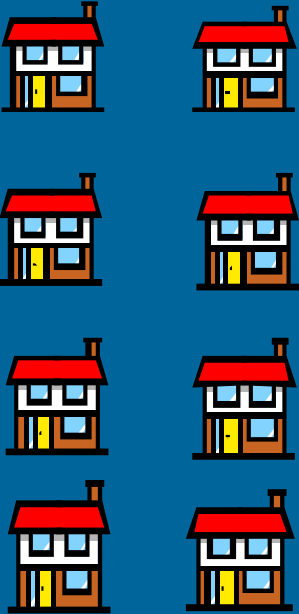
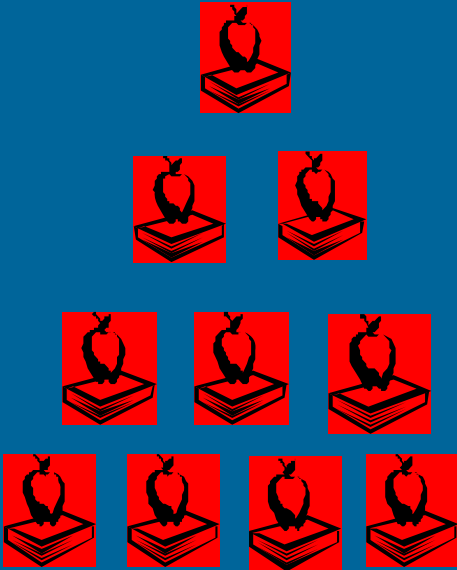
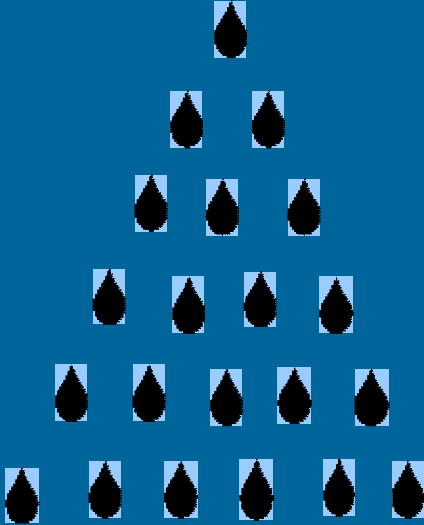
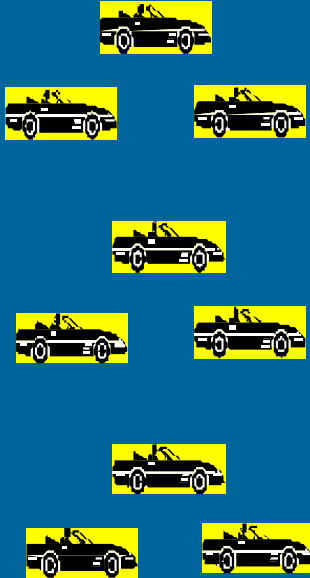
## Changes in Household Size: 1970-2000



Source: U. S. Census

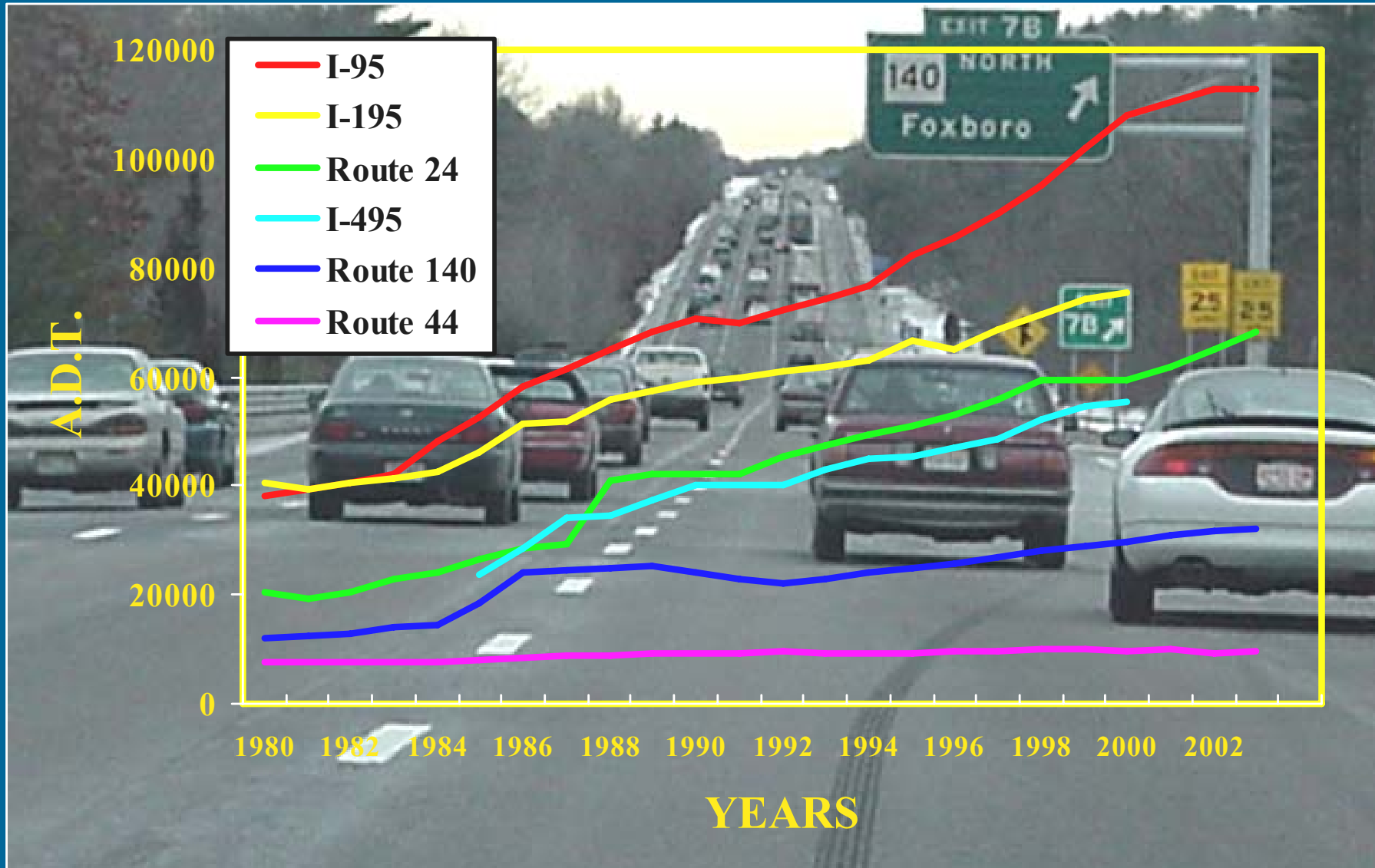
# 4. IMPACTS OF GROWTH

Impacts of 10,000 additional people per year

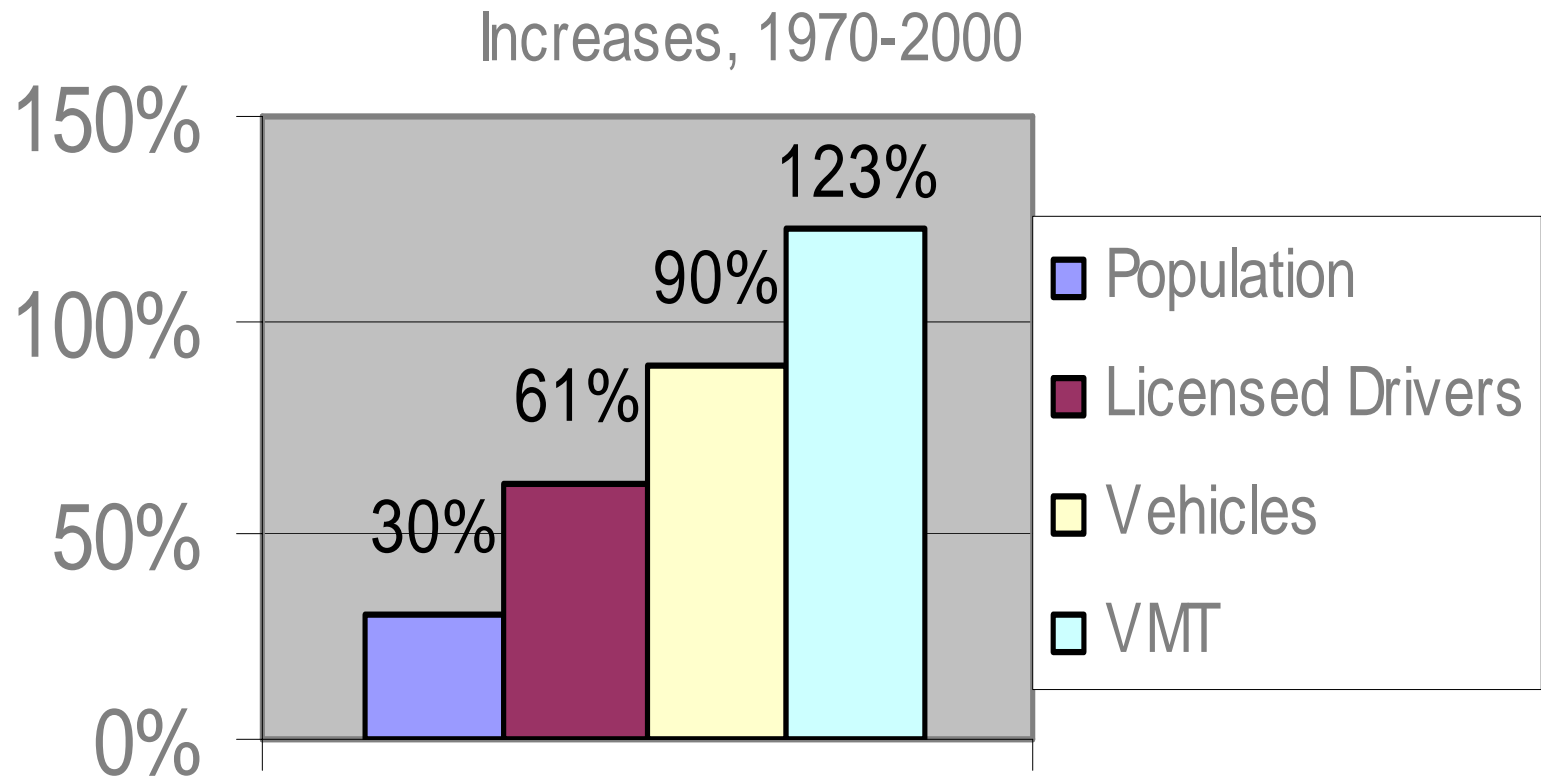
3,500	2,157	710,000	27,650
Additional Units/Year	New Students Enrolled/Year	Gallons Of Water Use/Day	Extra Vehicle Trips/Day
			

# 4. IMPACTS OF SPRAWL- TRAFFIC

1980 –2003 Average Daily Traffic Trends



## 4. IMPACTS OF GROWTH: TRAFFIC (U.S.)



Source: AAA

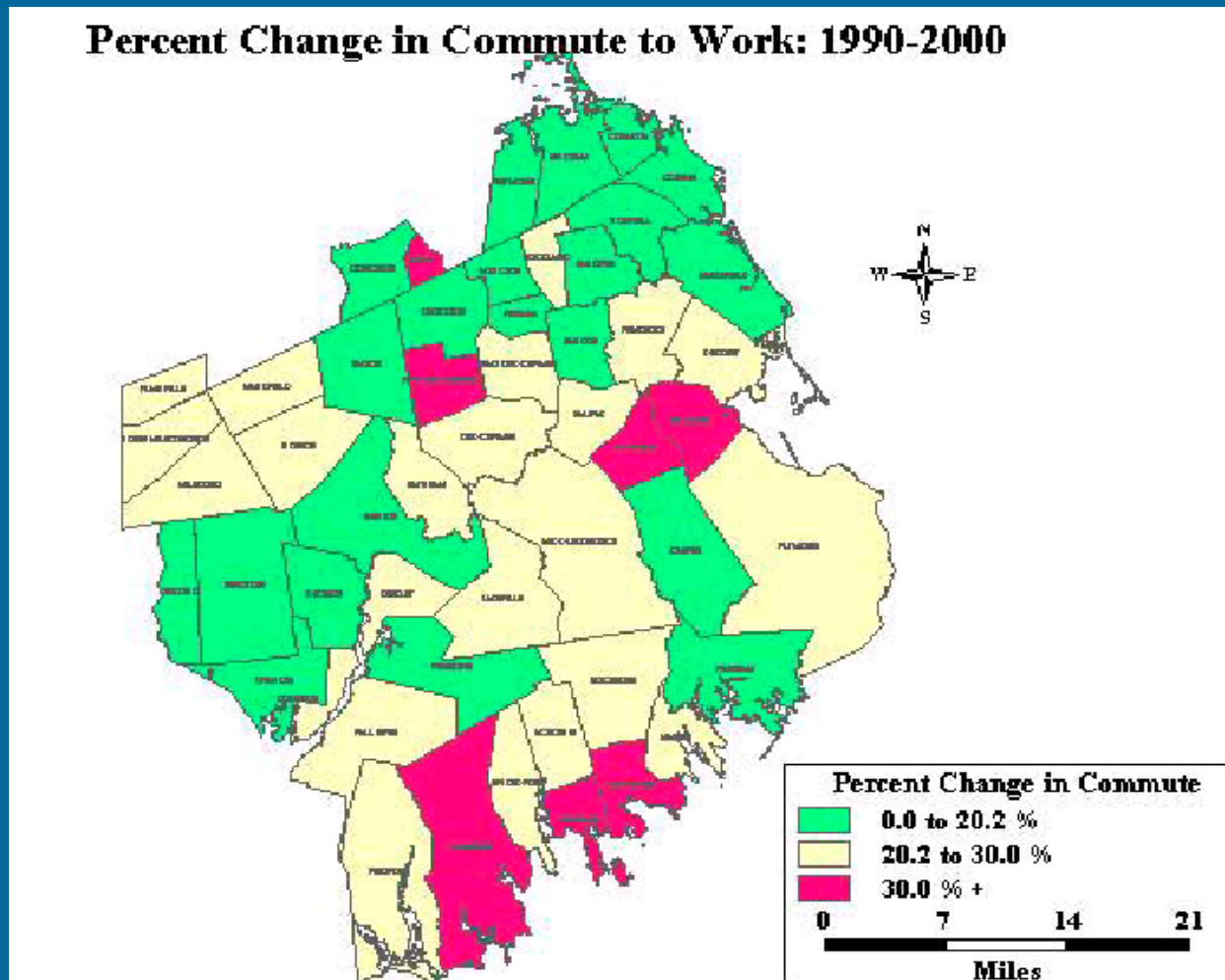
## 4. IMPACTS OF SPRAWL - COST

Cost of Sprawl vs. Targeted Development  
(\$ Mill. – 20 year period)

	<u>Rhode Island</u>	<u>New Jersey</u>
● Capital Costs		
• Roads	+\$ 78 M	+\$ 700 M
• Utilities	+\$ 133 M	+\$ 562 M
• Schools	+\$ 32 M	+\$ 178 M
Subtotal Capital Costs	<b>+\$ 243 M</b>	<b>+\$1,440 M</b>
● Additional Annual Operating Costs		
	<b>+\$ 9.1 M</b>	<b>+\$ 380 M</b>

Source: The Costs of Suburban Sprawl and Urban Decay in Rhode Island, H.C.Planning Consultant, Inc., 1999; Impact Assessment of the New Jersey Interim State Development and Redevelopment Plan, Robert Burchell, 1992

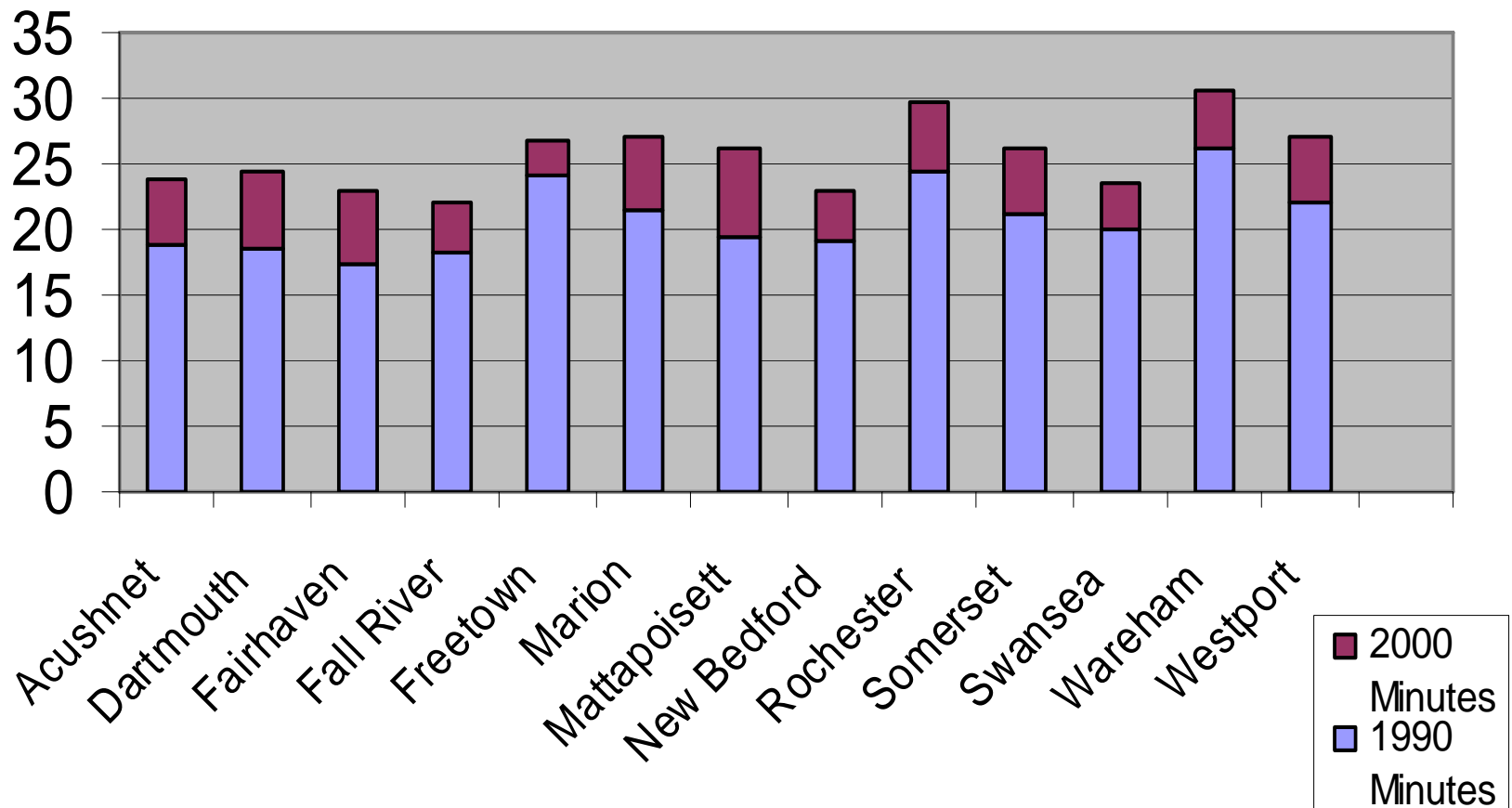
## 4. IMPACTS OF GROWTH - QUALITY OF LIFE



## 4. IMPACTS OF GROWTH

### QUALITY OF LIFE (TRAFFIC)

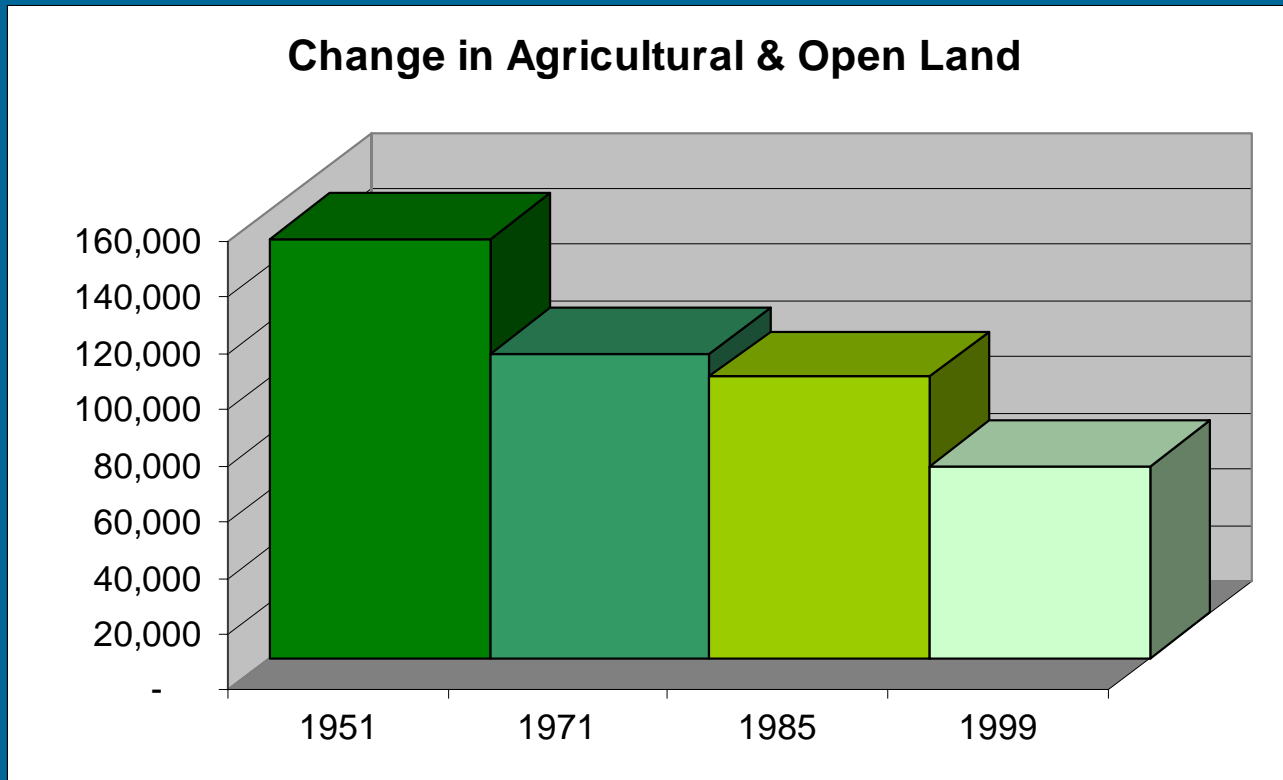
Average Commute to Work one way (in minutes), 1990-2000  
(Regional increase = 23% in 10 years)



# 4. IMPACTS OF GROWTH

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### Loss of Agricultural & Open Land



Source: UMass; Mass GIS

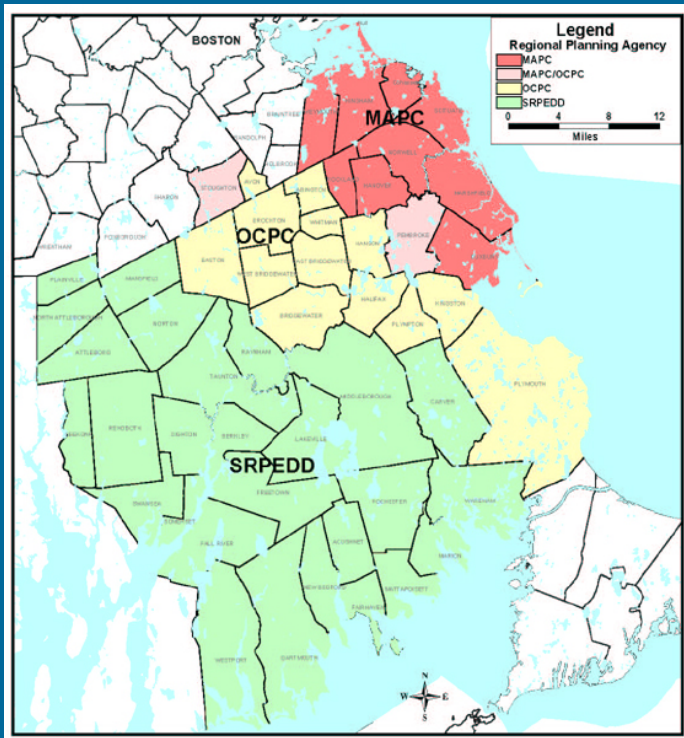
# SUMMARY: Our current growth pattern (sprawl)

- Lowers our economic competitiveness
  - ✓ Higher costs of infrastructure
  - ✓ Higher distribution costs
  - ✓ Makes our region less attractive to business
- Diminishes quality of life
  - ✓ More time on the road
  - ✓ Environmental degradation
  - ✓ Loss of farms and open space
  - ✓ Quality of life the #1 factor in company location decisions



# SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS RESPONSE: *Vision 2020*

Initiated in 1998 by the three RPA's



## Accomplishments of Vision 2020

- ✓ *Agenda for the Future – 1999*
- ✓ *New Mayflower Compact – 2000*
- ✓ *Smart Growth Audit – 2004*
- ✓ *Local Technical Assistance – 1998-2005*

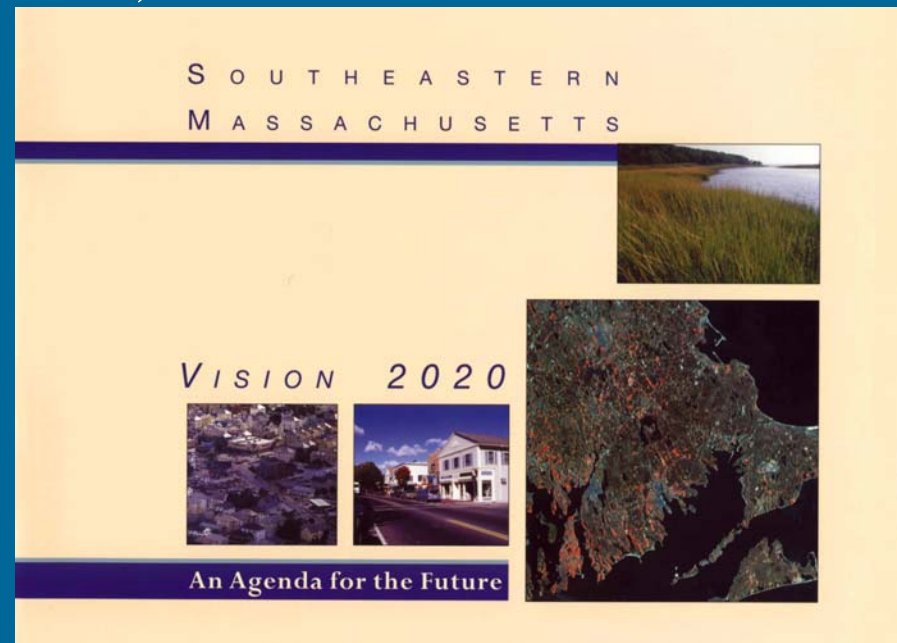


# Southeastern Massachusetts

## Vision 2020:

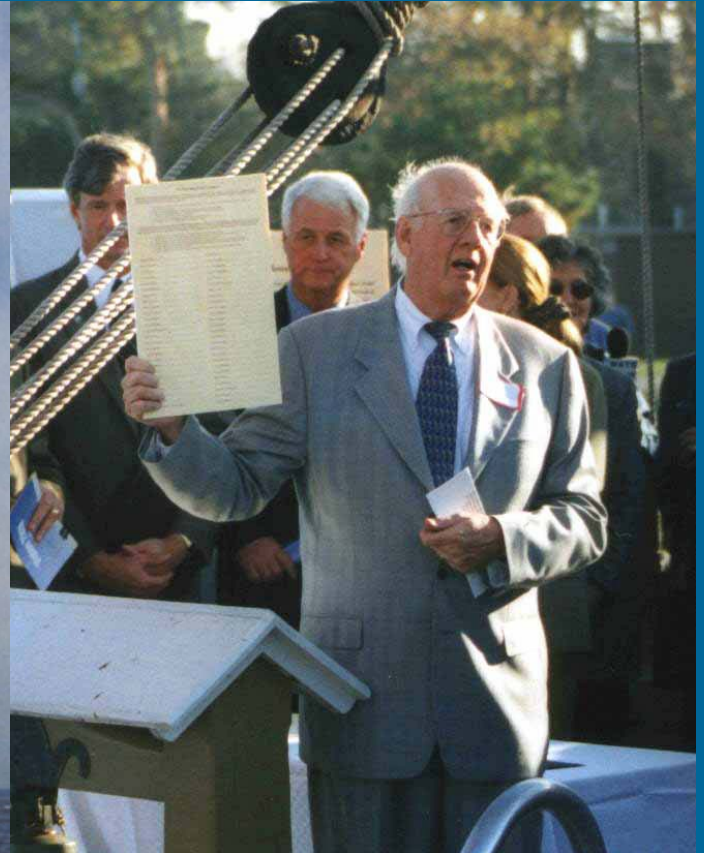
### *Agenda for the Future - 1999*

- Proposed Visions and Actions
- Implement with existing institutions and structures (Compact among municipalities)
- Regulatory model rejected
- Seek funding for regional strategies
- Advocate for changes to state law



# New Mayflower Compact

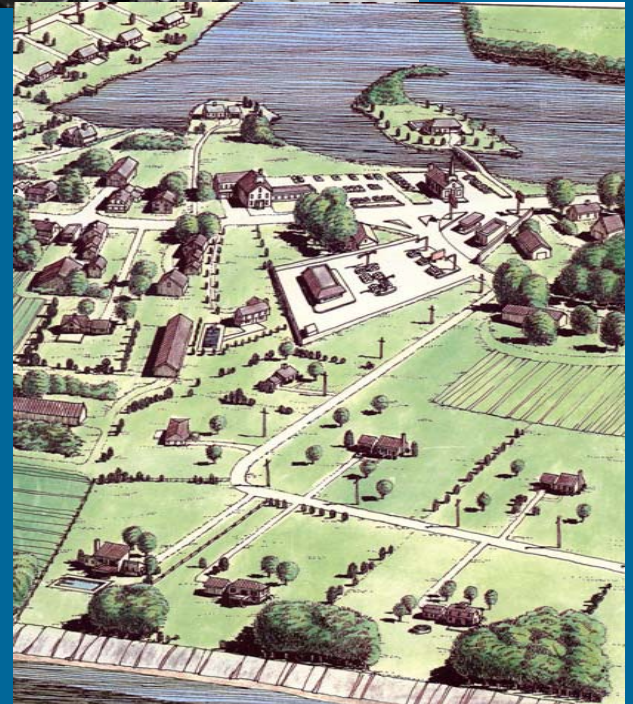
A Voluntary Regional Agreement to Manage Growth  
(2000)



*“We whose names are underwritten.... do by these presents.... covenant and combine ourselves together .... for our better ordering and preservation ....”*

# New Mayflower Compact - 5 Visions

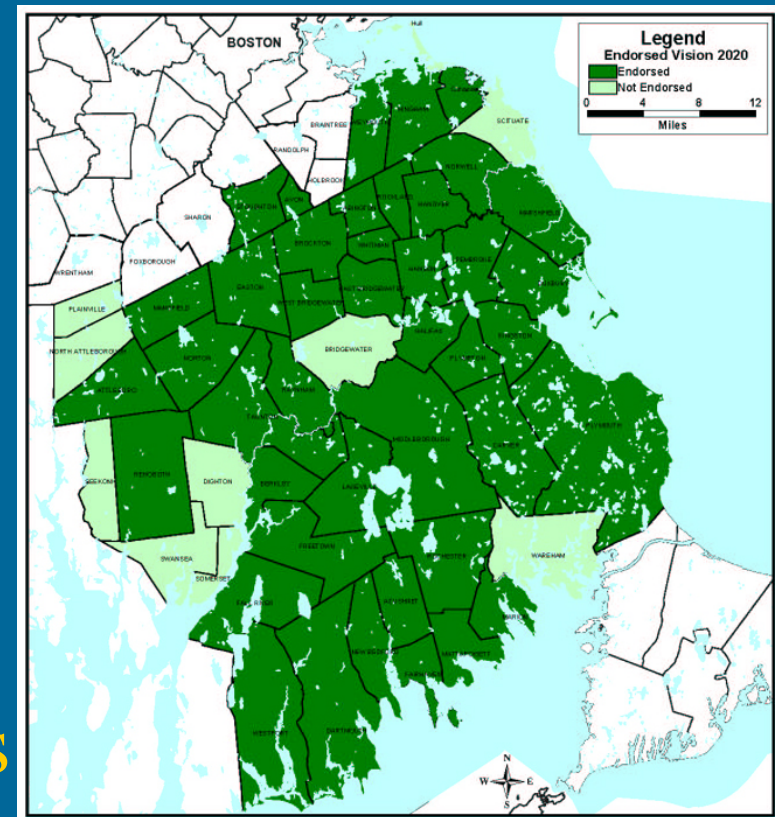
- 1: Vital centers of economic activity and culture
- 2: Unique development vs. homogenous landscape
- 3: Pro agriculture
- 4: Choices for development
- 5: Infrastructure to serve us



# Recommended Actions in Compact

- ✓ Create Targeted Investment Areas
- ✓ Expand planning tools, technical assistance and financial support
- ✓ Reform tax laws that promote sprawl
- ✓ Address impacts of major development projects
- ✓ Execute regional agreements
- ✓ Regional water supply planning & land protection

Endorsed by 43 communities  
....but it is **voluntary**



# Smart Growth Audit: April, 2004

How are we doing?

- ❖ 46 of 52 cities and towns responded in self appraisal
- ❖ Completed by Planning Boards, Town Planners & Small Cross-Committee Groups.
- ❖ Form included 48 questions.
- ❖ Questions looked at regulations, procedures, and development activity.
- ❖ The statistics back-up gut feelings about the status of smart growth.



# Audit Question Categories

1. Encourage growth in areas with existing infrastructure
2. Mix compatible land uses
3. Build compactly
4. Provide a range of housing opportunities
5. Create a strong sense of place
6. Preserve open space, critical environmental areas, farmland, and places of natural beauty.
7. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.



# Smart Growth Audit

## Summary of Scores



75-100 pts

*Communities growing smart*

3 Communities - 7 %

50 -74 pts

*Communities starting to grow smart*

19 Communities - 41 %

< 50 pts

*Communities not yet growing smart*

24 Communities - 52 %

# Findings of Smart Growth Audit

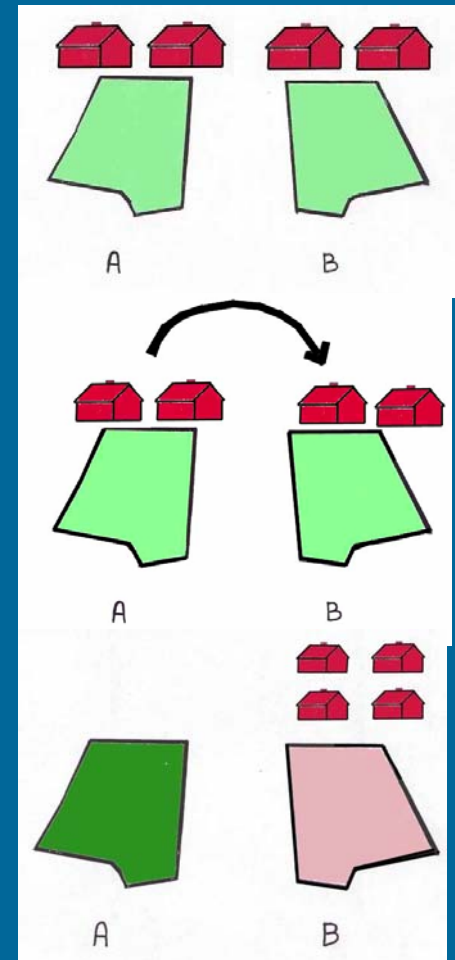


1. While more communities are undertaking planning work, implementation remains a major hurdle.

# Findings of Smart Growth Audit



2. Many basic smart growth zoning provisions are underutilized.



# Findings of Smart Growth Audit



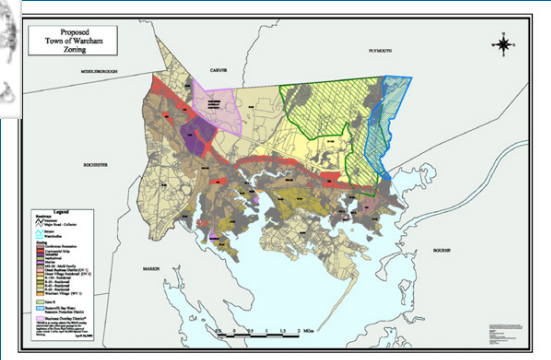
3. Communities need technical assistance - especially the smaller ones.

# Findings of Smart Growth Audit



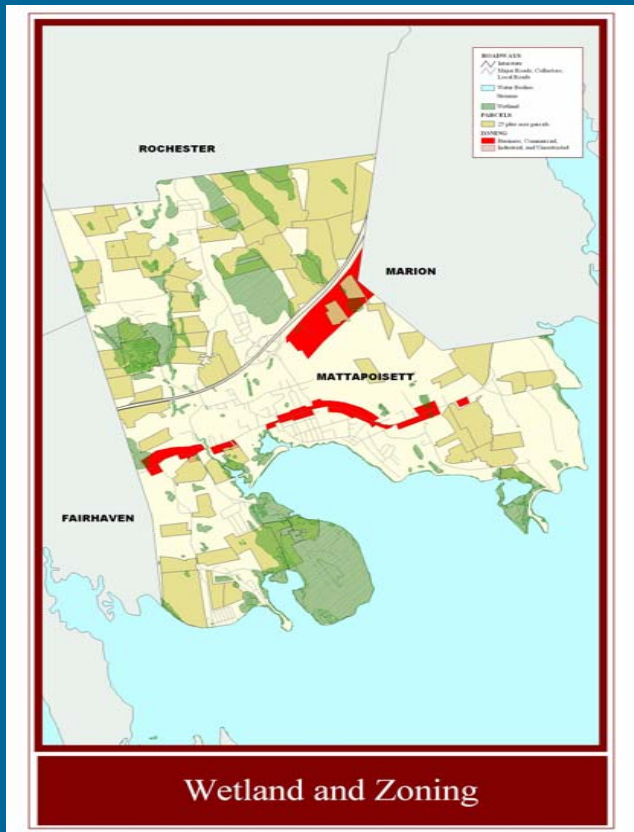
4. Infrastructure coordination makes land use and fiscal sense, yet communities do not use infrastructure investments to guide development.

## A scenic view of a large, two-story yellow house with a grey roof and a chimney, situated on a green lawn. A horse is grazing in the foreground, and a pond with a stone bridge is visible in the lower part of the image.



# Local Technical Assistance

- E.O.418, SGTA and EOEA grants to Vision 2020
- Cluster bylaws, village zones and TDR adopted (wastewater remains a problem)
- Needs strong educational component
- Limited success with regional approaches



# CHALLENGES AHEAD

1. Leadership
2. Municipal Capacity and Cooperation
3. Fiscal Impacts
4. Education



# CHALLENGES AHEAD

# 1. Leadership needed at all levels

● State

- ✓ Structure (Office of Commonwealth Development)
- ✓ Change the Legal Framework for planning & development
- ✓ Financial support

## ● Regional and Local

- ✓ RPA's advisory only

- Private/non-profit



# CHALLENGES AHEAD

## Leadership: What is being done elsewhere?

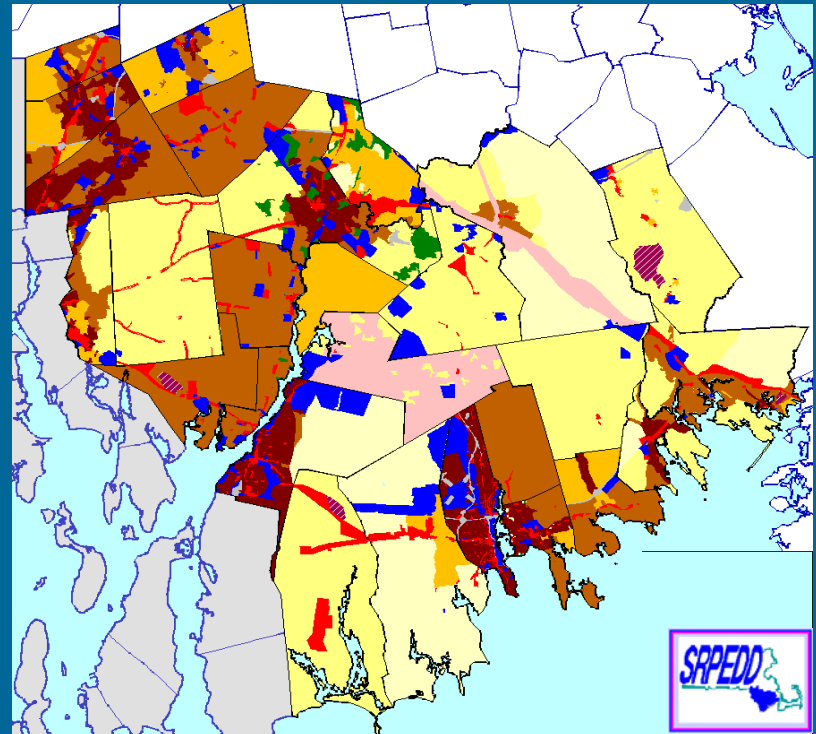
- ✓ Vermont – Act 250
- ✓ Maryland – Smart Growth (Priority Funding Areas)
- ✓ Oregon – Urban Growth Boundaries
- ✓ Rhode Island/New Jersey – Rehab Code
- ✓ Florida – Comprehensive Planning Law
- ✓ Cape Cod Commission (DRI's; incentives)

# CHALLENGES AHEAD

## 2. Municipal Capacity and Cooperation

*Efforts by one community to do the right thing are offset by neighbors doing nothing*

- ✓ Tools underutilized
- ✓ Communities unprepared; small communities very unprepared
- ✓ Solutions are regional; the structure is not
- ✓ Competition for revenue enhancing development



# CHALLENGES AHEAD

## 3. Fiscal Impacts: *In Massachusetts, it is not in a community's financial interest to control sprawl*

### Cost of Community Services by Land Use

- ✓ Residential  
*\$1.00:\$1.10 (revenue/cost)*
- ✓ Commercial/Industrial  
*\$1.00:\$0.48 (revenue/cost)*
- ✓ Farm/Forest/Open  
*\$1.00:\$0.42 (revenue/cost)*

*Source: American Farmland Trust*



# CHALLENGES AHEAD

## 4. Education: *Decision makers at all levels need to understand what is at stake in the region's future development*

- State Officials/Legislators
  - ✓ Tools and funds
- Town officials/town meeting
  - ✓ Short term gain vs. long term costs
  - ✓ Training for decision makers
  - ✓ Vested interest in status quo
- Public
  - ✓ Equate quality of life issues with economic loss
  - ✓ Traffic congestion and open space loss a result of sprawl



# THANK YOU

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Southeastern Regional Planning &  
Economic Development District (SRPEDD)

Taunton (508) 824-1367

[www.srpedd.org](http://www.srpedd.org)